

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4671

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6376

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, BG

SUBJECT: INDO- PAK NEGOTIATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 6202

SUMMARY: SWISS AMBASSADOR REAL SAYS PAKISTAN HAS SENT ANOTHER HARD- LINE AIDE- MEMOIRE TO INDIA, THEREBY INCREASING INDIAN GOVERNMENT CONFUSION OVER THE CONFLICTING PAK SIGNALS. REAL BELIEVES PAKS FEEL THEY ARE IN A STRONG POSITION ON THE POW ISSUE AND ARE ACTING ACCORDINGLY. THIS BODES ILL FOR PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMILA AGREEMENT, PARTICULARLY IF INDIA BECOMES COMPLETELY CONVINCED IT IS ENGAGED IN A " NO- WIN" DIPLOMATIC GAME WITH PAKISTAN. END SUMMARY.

1. SWISS AMBASSADOR REAL INFORMED POLCOUNSELOR TODAY THAT PAKISTAN HAD SENT NEW AIDE- MEMOIRE TO GOI MAY 27 ON SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS ON POWS AND BANGALEE AND PAKISTANI DETAINEES. INDIANS HOLDING FACT OF AIDE- MEMOIRE VERY CLOSELY. PAK MESSAGE, ACCORDING TO REAL, IS EVEN TOUGHER THAN AID- MEMOIRE ON SAME SUBJECT MAY 11 (REFTEL) AND AGAIN CONVEYS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FLAVOR THAN AZIZ AHMED MWJ 16 LETTER. MAIN THRUST OF AIDE- MEMOIRE IS THAT INDIANS HAVE NO BUSINESS WHATSOEVER
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INTERESTING THEMSELVES IN QUESTIONS OF BANGLAEE AND PAK (BIHARI)

DETAINEES IN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH. THESE ARE ISSUES WHICH ONLY PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH CAN DISCUSS AND RESOLVE. ONLY QUESTION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN IS POW ISSUE. REAL SAID INDIANS COMPLETELY CONFUSED OVER CONFLICTING PAK SIGNALS AND UNDECIDED HOW TO RESPOND.

2. REAL OFFERED FOLLOWING INTERPRETATION OF RECENT EVENTS:

PAKISTAN IS CONVINCED IT HAS STRONG POSITION ONPOWS. IT BELIEVES INDIA ULTIMATELY WILL HAVE TO GIVE THEM BACK BUT FEELS LITTLE IF ANY PRESSURE DOMESTICALLY TO HURRY THIS PROCESS ALONG. (REAL SAID AZIZ AHMED HAD TOLD HIM AT ONE POINT THAT SOLDIERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE ACCUSTOMED TO LONG SEPERATIONS AND THEY COULD ENDURE EVEN PROTRACTED DELAY IN RETURN OF POWS.) PAKS BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO BRING PRESURE TO BEAR AGAINST INDIANS IN INTERNATIONAL ARENA-- INCLUDING AT NEXT UNGA SESSION-- FOR NON- RETURN OF POWS. BHUTTO AND TIKKA KHAN CONTINUE TO BE UNDER DOMESTIC PRESSURE, PARTICULARLY WITHIN ARMY, TO AVERT TRIALS BY BANGLA DESH. SINCE TIKKA KHAN PERSONALLY TO BE TRIED " IN ABSENTIA" THIS STRENGTHENS HIS HAND IN PRESURING BHUTTO TO PUT UP VERY HARD FRONT IN ALL RESPECTS TO PREVENT TRIALS. FURTHER, PAKS WISH DELAY OR PREVENT ANY MOVES TOWARD CHINESE RAPPROACHMENT OR IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH BANGLA DESH OR INDIA. THEY ARE CONVINCED THEY HAVE CHINESE COMMITMENT TO DO NOTHING UNTIL POW AND PAK- BANGLAEE NORMALIZATION ACHIEVED. THIS PROVIDES FURTHER INCENTIVE FOR BHUTTO TO DELAY RESOLUTION OF EITHER ISSUE.

3. REAL BELIEVES INDIANS CAUGHT ON HORNS OF DILEMMA-- DESIRE TO BE RID OF POWS, MAINTAIN CLOSE LINKS WITH AND CONFIDENCE OF MUJHIB, AND INTEREST IN MOVING ALONG SIMLA PROCESS. REAL BELIEVES PAKS ARE OUTMANEUVERING INDIANS WHO FIND THEMSELVES INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED.

4. REAL ACKNOWLEDGES THIS EXTREMELY CYNICAL ASSESSMENT OF PAK MANUEVERING IN CURRENT SITUATION, BUT HE SAYS HE BELIEVES PAKS ARE CONVINCED THEY CAN PURSUE SUCH POLICY SUCCESSFULLY. HE AGREES HIS INTERPRETATION DOES NOT BODE WELL FOR PROSPECTS OF RENEWED PROGRESS ON SIMLA AGREEMENTS.

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5. DURING COURTESY CALL BY DCM, MEA JOINT SECRETARY K. P. S. MENON, DIRECTOR OF BANGLADESH DIVISION CONFIRMED REAL'S REPORT ON CONTENTS OF LATEST PAK AIDE MEMOIRE. MENON ADDED THAT AIDE MEMOIRE ALSO COMPLAINS THAT INDIA HAS REFUSED TO MEET FOR TALKS WITH PAKISTAN. GOI, ACCORDING TO MENON IS PERPLEXED REGARDING WHICH PAK MESSAGE TO BELIEVE. CONCERNS BASED UPON AIDE MEMOIRE AND PAK REFERENCE OF POW ISSUE TO ICJ, ARE GROWING WITHIN GOI THAT PAKISTAN DOES NOT NOW INTEND TO BEGIN TALKS

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ECTED TOWARD NORMALIZATION. THIS, ACCRODING TO MENON, RETURNS SITUATION TO WHERE IT HAS BEEN FOR PAST TWENTY YEARS. GOI ALSO ATTACHES WEIGHT TO ITS ESIMATE THAT BOTH PAK ARMY AND AIR FORCE ARE STRONGER NOW THAN IN 1971. MENON REPORTED THAT INDIA HAD NOT YET RESPONDED TO AZIZ AHMED LETTER AND, WHILE DECISION ON RESPONSE NOT YET MADE, SPECULATED THAT GOI WOULD SIMPLY ASK GOP WHICH DOCUMENT REPRESENTS ITS POSITION. INDIAN POSITION REMAINS AS SET FORTH IN SWARAN SINGH LETTER.

6. FOR ISLAMABAD: WE RECOGNIZE REAL ANALYSIS CONSIDERABLY AT VARIANCE WITH YOURS, AND WITH VIEWS YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING FROM PAK OFFICIALS. WE WOULD BEINTERESTED IN YOUR COMMENTS. THERE OBVIOUSLY POTENTIALLY SERIOUS RISKS IF INDIANS WHO ARE INCREASINGLY INCLINED TO INTERPRET THE SITUATION THEY WAY REAL HAS, BECOME COMPLETELY CONVINCED THEY ARE ENGAGED IN " NO-WIN" DIPLOMATIC GAME IN WHICH PAKISTAN DIDDLEING THEIR INTERESTS ON ALL FRONTS. REAL BELIEVES FOREIGN MINISTRY CONCERNED ABOUT POLITICAL REACTION IF EXTREMELY TOUGH TONE OF RECENT PAK AIDE-MEMOIRE WERE TO SURFACE HERE. THE GOI WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS INTENSIVELY IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS FOLLOWING FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH' S IMMINENT RETURN AND BEFORE MRS. GANDHI' S JUNE 15 DEPARTURE ON HER TRIP TO YUGOSLAVIA, CANADA, FIJI AND TONGA. THE INTERNAL SITUATION-- FOOD SHORTAGES, INFLATION, AND OPPOSITION PRESSURE OVER THESE-- MAKE MRS. GANDHI CAUTIOUS ABOUT ANY INDIAN ACTION WHICH MIGHT PROMPT RENEWED CHARGES OF A " SELL- OUT" AND ADD TO HER PROBLEMS. INDEED, A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE INTERNAL SITUATION MIGHT PROMPT MRS. GANDHI TO FLAIL THE PERCEIVED PAKISTANI INTRANSIGANCE TO RALLY PUBLIC SUPPORT.

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